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ABSTRACT.

The American Indian experience at the University of California, Davis is examined, with particular attention given to problems they encounter and to cultural and environmental supports needed for their survival. Information is provided on: the awareness of faculty, students and administrators of Indian culture, history, and problems; the entering characteristics of Indian students; their academic performance; their perceptions of the campus, including academic assistance, housing, and financial assistance; and needed cultural and environmental supports. The appendices contain a copy of the awareness questionnaire completed by a number of different campus groups (and the correct answers), the interview format used in conducting interviews with Indian students, and selected interview comments. (SPG)

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THE NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

research report no. 1 office for student affairs research and evaluation university of california, davis

THE NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Allan Tesche Andrea Kelsey Titus Frenchman W. David Haggerty Vicki Doerper John M. Winkworth

Research Report #1 Office for Student Affairs Research and Evaluation University of California, Davis

June, 1974

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Introduction

The Davis campus of the University of California, like many other colleges and universities throughout the country, has responded to the demands that higher education be made more accessible to low income and ethnic minorities. Effort over the last five years in the areas of recruitment, financial assistance, and counseling has resulted in a steady increase in the number of minorities enrolling at UC Davis. In 1968 ethnic minority students represented 7 percent of the total undergraduate population; steadily increasing since them, they now comprise 14 percent of that population.

But despite these efforts, Davis remains a predominantly white, middle-to-upper class campus. As such, it is very alien to most ethnic minority students whose background and experiences are often quite different. While all of the various ethnic groups are influenced in some way, none is more affected by this dissimilarity than the Native American.

The purpose of this study is to examine in careful detail the Indian experience at UC Davis, paying particular attention to the problems they encounter and to the cultural and environmental supports needed for their survival.

Campus Awareness

The ability of any ethnic minority group to adapt to a different culture depends, in large part, on the degree to which that group is understood by the predominant culture. In order to assess the relative levels of awareness of Indian culture, history, and contemporary problems held by individuals at Davis, a short questionnaire was developed (Appendix A). David Risling and the staff at the Tecumseh Center=the Native American center on campus--worked with the Student Affairs Research and Evaluation office on the construction of this instrument.

In the winter quarter of 1974, the questionnaire was completed by a number of different campus groups. Student responses were obtained from a lower division physics class, predominantly science majors, and an upper division history class, as well as from a group of Native Americans. An administrative group made up of directors of various departments in Student Affairs also consented to respond. A fifth group from off-campus (a church group) was included to provide additional information.

By answering three out of every four questions correctly, the Indian students demonstrated a high degree of familiarity with their own culture. Considerably less aware were the other student groups (each had 46 percent correct), the administrators (51 percent), and the community group (40 percent). Even allowing for errors in the questionnaire design, these differences are quite substantial and indicate a relatively low level of awareness on the part of those non-Indians sampled.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from these results is that the student from a Native American background comes to the campus with a set of values and experiences totally different from most faculty; students, and administrators. Any attempt to successfully integrate this and other ethnic groups into campus life must be based on an awareness and understanding of these differences.

Sources of Lyformation

An extensive review of the research Titerature reveals a limited number of studies or reports on the Native American in higher education. Two sources which were quite helpful in providing an overall perspective on Indian education were reports conducted for committees of the California legislature. (Native Americans in Higher Education, 1973), and the United States Senate (The Education of the American Indian, 1969). Data available on the performance of Native American undergraduates at Davis consists of statistical

Registrar's and Admissions Offices (Skinner, 1973; Gallego, 1974). The Student Ethnic Survey (1974) is the only source of information that is not strictly based on EOP students.

Twenty-five in-depth interviews conducted with Indian students provided additional information. (The structured interview format is presented in Appendix B.) Conducted by two Native American students, these interviews concentrated on the identification and clarification of those services and programs which help or hinder the students' campus success.

Entering Characteristics

Native American students come to UC Davis in smaller numbers than those of any other ethnic minority group. In the fall of 1973, the 94 enrolled Native American students represented only .8 percent of all undergraduates (Asian - 8%, Black - 2.9%, Chicano - 2.6%). Over one-half (54 percent) enter with EOP financial assistance, a greater percentage than each of the other groups. Approximately 12 percent are married, which is considerably more than those in the total undergraduate population, but less than percentages for Black and Chicano students. One additional difference is that Native Americans are more likely to come from greater distances (38 percent lived 100 miles or more from Davis at the time of admission versus Asian - 3%, Black - 8%, and Chicano - 6%).

Previous academic performance for Native Americans is far from encouraging. For one thing, of all the various EOP groups, Indians have the smallest percentage of students eligible for regular admittance to the University. Their 14 percent compares to 21 percent for Black, 29 percent for Chicano, and 48 percent for Asian. Furthermore, a comparison of the median grade point averages for entering EOP freshmen (Skinner, 1973) revealed that Native American averages were the lowest, slightly below that of Black students.

Although 46 percent of the Native American students come to Davis after completing work at another institution, most are initially classified as freshmen. This group also had a lower previous institution GPA than any other comparable group.

Native Americans enter campus life imbued with a sense of tribalism that significantly influences most of what they do. They are raised with the idea that the needs of the group or the community take precedence over individual needs; as a result, they are not very competitive. They are not likely to seek success at the expense of another's failure. Also, they are often quite hesitant to speak for themselves since that right is reserved for the tribal spokesman, who speaks for the entire group. Another indication of the importance of tribalism is the close tie that Native Americans maintain with their family and relatives. Providing economic as well as emotional support to family members is a never ending responsibility. A final example is the marked resistance by Indians to attempts of acculturation. They fight a continuous struggle to retain the integrity of their own way of life.

Academic Performance

The difficulties faced by Indian students in the campus environment are clearly demonstrated by data on their academic performance. Based on the students entering Davis between 1968 and 1971, the Native American median grade point average after the first year was 2.41—the lowest of the EOP groups. The same held true for the total grade point average for all four years; the 2.44 for Indian students was again the lowest.

The most definitive picture of all is presented by the data in Table 1. This summary, compiled at the end of fall quarter 1973, indicates the performance of EOP students enrolling at UC Davis between 1968 and 1972.

TABLE 1

Post Fall Quarter 1974
Status of EOP Students Enrolled from 1968 to 1972
(In Percent)

Group	Graduated-	Dismissed or Withdrew	Continuing or Transferred
Asian (N=200)	19 🤾	23	. 58
Black (N=313)	Ž · 26 · `	40	34
Chicano (N=277)	24	34	38 →
Native American (N=94)	· 9 [,] ·	65	26

From a total of 94 Native American students enrolling at Davis, only 9 percent have graduated. Nearly two-thirds of the 94 students have either withdrawn or, more commonly, been dismissed for poor academic performance.

Native American Perceptions of the Campus

The interviews conducted during the winter quarter of 1974 yielded a number of fairly clear problems for Indian students. (A sample of comments made in the interviews is contained in Appendix C.) In the academic area, those interviewed were most vehement about the lack of competent advising. While a smaller number felt that their academic difficulties stemmed from either inadequate preparation or a lack of understanding on the part of faculty and teaching assistants, all were in agreement that the lack of help with practical information was a serious problem. They saw no one available for "nuts and bolts" advice on such matters as how to register, enroll, or deal with the Financial Aids Office. They perceived the counselors, supposedly available for such advice, to be less interested in the practical information needed to function effectively and more concerned with what they perceived to be "serious head trips." Most of the 25 students interviewed

felt that the Indian counselors, at least in their positions as presently constituted, were of little help to Indian students.

One exception to the general dissatisfaction with practical advice was the help provided by the Learning Assistance Center (LAC). Many of the Native American students commended the LAC for the attentive and practical approach which is taken in aiding students.

Housing was another service area which was perceived in a favorable light by the majority of respondents. Although they clearly share the general student complaints with the high cost of rents in Davis, they did express satisfaction with the quality of housing available. With a few exceptions, they were pleased with the level of service offered by the Housing Office. In most cases their contacts concerned information and referrals about off-campus housing. The two Indians living in on-campus residence halls expressed no particular difficulty in their living situation.

Undoubtedly the most serious problem was with financial assistance. Most agreed that the problem--spoken of at length by each of the students interviewed--was with obtaining financial assistance. Four basic concerns were enumerated. First, students repeatedly asserted that the Financial Aids Office (FAO) did not provide enough information about the mechanics of applying for and receiving financial aid. A particular difficulty was with obtaining funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A second complaint was that the level of financial support, along with yearly cutbacks in individual budgets, caused severe hardships.

Another problem noted by the respondents was the inefficiency of the FAO. Nearly every student cited at least one major administrative error made by the FAO in dealing with their applications. Misplaced files, lost letters, arithmetic errors, and awards delayed for months were among the more frequent examples mentioned. A fourth and final concern was with the perceived indifference or callousness of the FAO staff in dealings with Native Americans.

The consensus seemed to be that unless a student was pushy, aggressive, and persistent in dealings with the FAO, he or she stood a good chance of being ignored.

Cultural and Environmental Supports

A number of excellent steps have been taken on the Davis campus to provide cultural and environmental support for Native American students. The Tecumseh Center serves as a focal point of resources and programming for the Native American community at UC Davis. Students with a major in Applied Behavioral Sciences have the option of specializing in Native American Studies. Some effort has also been expended by the Office for Student Affairs in hiring Native American students and staff in key counseling and advising positions. In 1973-74 a total of six individuals were employed, ranging from part-time counselors in the Peer Advising and Counseling (PAC) office to a full-time staff member in the Counseling Center.

In spite of these actions, significant deficiencies remain. The most glaring among these is financial assistance, a problem which has confronted the Native American student in higher education for some time (Educating the Educators, 1971; McKinley and Kingsbury, 1972). The situation at Davis is quite severe and does not show any signs of abating. Because inadequate financing has clearly been established as a major reason for the high rate of Indian attrition (The Education of the American Indian, 1969; Native Americans in Higher Education, 1973), alteration of the present procedure seems essential to effect significant change.

Those interviewed offered a number of specific suggestions as to how this situation could be improved. One idea was that a Native American staff member be appointed to handle the applications of Indian students for financial aid. Another was that a student intern could be appointed to serve as an information source and advocate for Native Americans. A third, more pervasive

thought was that the entire Financial Aids Office staff adopt a more understanding and helpful attitude toward Native Americans and that steps be
taken to improve internal office procedures and efficiency. The Native Americans were adamant in advocating that action must be taken to improve the
situation on this campus.

A second critical deficiency in the environmental support needed by Native Americans was in the area of advising. Here the problem was not an inadequate number of Native American counselors, but that the counselors were directing their energies in ways that were of little benefit to Native American students. It was suggested that these counselors be more directly accountable to Native American students and that the bulk of their work be directed toward helping Indians develop the practical skills needed to survive on the campus.

A third major deficiency was seen to be the general lack of knowledge, understanding of and indifference to the Native American by the vast majority of non-Indian faculty, students, and staff.

As a partial remedy, several students suggested that all UCD students be required to take at least one Native American studies course as part of the American History and Institutions requirement. It was even suggested that faculty and administrators might benefit from taking at least one Native American studies course.

Conclus ton

Among the difficulties experienced by Native Americans at Davis, one of the most critical is with financial assistance. The situation in the Financial Aids Office, as far as Indians are concerned, requires immediate improvement. At the very minimum, someone is needed to help guide the student successfully through the myriad of forms and procedures. At best, Native

Americans, as well as all students, would profit by a staff in the Financial Aids Office that treated each student with sensitivity and respect.

Another area of obvious dissatisfaction is with the scope of advising ser vices available to Native American students. They are not receiving the kind of practical information they seek and need. Native American counselors have been hired, yet their departmental responsibilities seem to severely handicap their ability to respond effectively to Native American students. The need, as articulated by the student and so much for a psychological counselor as it is for an advocate or generalist who can help deal with problems as diverse as selecting a major and applying for financial aid.

The exceedingly low survival rate of Native American students points out the need to reassess the efforts being made to assist these students in adapting to the rigors of the educational environment at Davis. At the same time, attempts must be added to increase the adaptability of the institution to needs of the Indian and other minority groups. To simply increase recruitment efforts in order to enroll greater numbers of Native Americans, though desirable in itself, does little to solve the problems of adjustment. The crucial test begins with a student's arrival on campus and continues as he attempts to cope with the stresses inherent in a campus culture—a culture markedly different from that/with which the Native American is most familiar.

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APPENDIX A

Awareness Questionhaire

· WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS?

Select the appropriate answer to the questions below and mark the corresponding bubble with a soft lead pencil on the IBM card provided.

Multiple choice questions

- 14 Your ethnic background is:
 - a. Asian
 - b. Black
 - c. Chicano
 - d. ilative American
 - e. White
- 2. Your class level is:
 - a. freshman
 - sophomore
 - c. junior
 - d. senior
 - e. graduate
 - n. other or not applicable
- 3. Your college is:
 - a. Agricultural and Environme Sciences
 - b. Engineering
 - c. Letters and Science
 - d. Professional or grad
 - n. not applicable,
- 4. Which one of these Indian tribes is a California tribe?
 - a: Nez-Perce
 - b. -Wintun
 - c. Cocopah
 - d. / Haidu
- 5. The approximate number of Indian reservations in California is:
 - a. . 5
 - b. 326
 - c. 40
 - d. 80
 - e. 150

30

over 150

- 12. Which of the following was not a part of U.S. "Indian Policy" during the 19th century?
 - a. slaughtering of the buffalo
 - b. issuance of blankets innoculated with small pox-
 - c. outlawing of various Indian religious ceremonies to break the spirit of the Indians
 - d. cavalry attacks on Indian villages at "Wounded Knee," S.D.
- 13. Between 1850 and 1880, the population of Native Americans in California:
 - å. increased moderately
 - b. remained about the same
 - ć. declined.50 persent
 - d. declined 80 percent
- 14. The suicide rate among Indian teenagers is:
 - a. slightly lower than that of Whites
 - b. about the same as Whites
 - .c. 2 times higher
 - d. 3 times higher

True-False Questions

On the IBM card please fill in bubble A for the statements below which are true, and bubble B for those which are false.

A = True B = False

- 15. Indian tribes in California did not have "chiefs" before the coming of the white man:
- 16. Indian tribes in North América had no formal style of government before contact with Europeans.
- 17. Indians living on reservations are still considered wards of the government even though they are U.S. citizens.
- 18. The California Legislature, shortly after statehood, succeeded in lobbying Congress into ratifying the U.S. treaties with California Indians.
- 19. Of the 389 treaties made between the United States and Indian tribes, approximately half have been honored by the U.S. government.

A = True o B = False

- 20. Indians have an inherited weakness toward alcoholism.
- 21. The life span of American Indians is approximately 20 years shorter than that of other Americans.
- 22. Indian people are the only race of people in the United States that have Federal laws which apply only to them.
- 23. Most tribal governments today have no real authority to make decisions, hence they are only "puppet" governments.
- 24. The land on which the University of California at Davis is located was taken illegally from the Indians, and this illegal taking has been judicially / recognized.
- 25. The UCD-Catalog lists less than ten courses in Native American Studies here.
- 26. The Native American Studies Program at UCD was one of the first Native American studies programs in the United States.
- 27. Native American Studies courses are désigned to meet only the needs of Native American students.
- 29. California, through its original constitution and legislative enactments, sought to protect Indian property and citizenship rights guaranteed by the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.

ANSWERS

Citations refer to authorities listed in the bibliography.

- 4. B Wintun. See Forbes, generally.
- 5. D 80. According to the Bureau of Indian of there are now 78 Indian reservations here in California.
- 6. D Black Elk. Oscara ANSWERS IN ERROR
 Tecumseh a Shawn Answer Sheet on mo was an Apache leader, mmanche leader. See Hodge generally.

 See Corrected Answer Sheet on mo was an Apache leader, mmanche leader. See Hodge
- 7. E Arizona.
- 8. B Hoopa. Located hear Eureka, California, the Hoopa Reservation is home for about 3,500 Indians.
- 9 E Over 150. At the time of the conquest there were 84 distinct dialects spoken in California by over 150 separate tribal groups. For information on the language groups, see Forbes, page 190.
- 10. A Attacks on Indian people at Wounded Knee. All other acts were official government policy during the 19th century designed to either control or reduce Indian population and break their spirit.
- 11.' D Declined 80%. After the discovery of gold, the wholesale elimination of California Indians by white settlers reduced the Indian population kere from 96,000 in 1850 to only 16,000 in 1880. See Forbes, page 59.
- 12. B Three times higher. On some reservations the suicide rate reaches ten times the national average. See Cahn, page 2.
- 13. A Less than 5%. The Kennedy hearings revealed that in 1968 only 3 percent of Indian students who enrolled in college graduated. Now, five years after that report, the figure does not exceed 25 percent.
- 14. E More than 20 years shorter. The average age of death of the American Indian is 44 years while the age at death for other Americans is 65. See Kennedy hearings, page X.
- 15. A 5%. Every treaty made between the United States and Indian tribes has been broken. See Cahn, page 11 for a description of the treaties and special laws governing Native Americans. Virtually every treaty guarantees equal education and health for Indians, yet these obligations have been simply ignored by the U.S. government.
- 16. FALSE. California Indians had relatively sophisticated tribal organizations, including centralized leadership long before the Spanish conquest. See Forbes, pages 1-27.
- 17. FALSE. See answer to #16 above.



Answers (cont.)

- 18. FALSE. Pressure by white California settlers caused Congress to reject treaties which would have guaranteed Walifornia Indians 7.5 million acres of reservation land, temporary food allottments, and agricultural assistance. See Forbes, page 63.
- 19. FALSE. Indian alcoholism is caused by feelings of worthlessness and power-lessness resulting from a state of "grinding poverty" according to studies cited by the Kennedy Subcommittee. Genetic characteristics were not cited as a factor causing Indian alcoholism.
- 20. FALSE. California's early laws which, among other things, prohibited Indian testimony in courts, limited Indian rights to own and aquire property, and permitted a form of Indian slavery, directly violating the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. See Forbes, page 60.
- 21. TRUE. There are about 850 thousand Indians living in the United States today. See Forbes page 6.
- 22. TRUE. The unemployment rate among Indians is nearly 40 percent. See <u>Kennedy</u> <u>Hearings</u>, page X.
- 23. FALSE. The average educational level for Indians under federal supervision has been calculated to be as low as 5th grade. Kennedy Hearings, page XII.
- 24. TRUE. The California Indian claims case before the U.S. Indian Claims Commission resulted in a settlement of \$29,100,000 on July 30, 1964, for land taken illegally from California Indians. The land involved included most of California.
- 25. FALSE. The current UCD Catalogue lists more than 20 courses in Native American Studies.
- 26. FALSE. Like any other U.S. citizen, the Native American does not need federal permission to come and go from his home.
- 27. FALSE. In 1968, for instance, over 60 percent of the nation's Indian children who attended school were enrolled in public, nonfederal schools. <u>Kennedy Hearings</u>, page XII.
- 28. FALSE. The 1924 Curtis Act guaranteed all Indians U.S. citizenship and full voting rights.
- 29. FALSE. Although many Indians on reservations, like other poor people, receive food stamps or AFDC, they do not receive federal money simply because they live on reservations.
- 30. TRUE. Only one persent of the nation's Indian children in elementary schools have Indian teachers or principals. See Kennedy Hearings, page IX.
- 31. TRUE. The average Indian income (\$1,500) is 75 percent below the national average. See Kennedy Hearings, page X.

Interview Format

- Basic Identification: Age, sex, major, year in school, home town, high school, other colleges attended.
- 2. Reasons for Selecting. UC Davis: How did you end up here? Who influenced you? How did you find out about UCD?
- 3. Beginning at UCD: 'Who did you first contact on campus? Any particular problems when you arrived?
- 4. Housing: Where do you now live? Die you use the services of the Housing Office?

 Did you have any problems in finding a place to live?
- 5. Financial Aid: Do you have any financial aid problems? Do you feel the amount of your award is sufficient? Do Indian students have special needs which the Financial Aids Office should take into account?
- 6. Counseling: Do you feel you have adequate counseling? Have you utilized the Indian counselors?
- 7. Advising: Have you used advisors at the First Resort? Peer Advisors? Have you ever used the facilities at the Learning Assistance Center?
- 8. Academics: Do you have trouble getting the classes that you want? Bo you have problems with registration? Are there changes you would make in course content?
- 9. Native American Community: How do you feel you are received in the UCD campus environment? the Native American community here? in the Davis community?
- 10. EQP Program: Has the EOP program been helpful to you-here at UCD?

APPENDIX C

Interview Comments

Selection of UCD

"No problem getting in other than red tape to go through. I was not aware of the process, and was not really informed either."

"UCD was suggested to me by a freind on the strength of the Native American Studies program here."

Beginning at UCD

"There was a lack of assistance in planning a program and, in general, beginning at a University. One suggestion is to send possible programs to students to give them some direction."

"Letter of acceptance was received one day before registration, then I didn't know what the hell to do."_____

Academics

"The quarter system is real fast. You don't have a lot of time for social things. You have no time to just live."

"The TA's are not receptive at all It's difficult to get by a TA to see the professor."

"I was not prepared at all for college coming out of high school, but I learned how to study through the center (LAC) so I made it fine."

Housing

"Dorm life is very good if a person is new. The dorm is the best place to meet folks."

"Housing Office was helpful in finding an apartment."

"Rent was way too high and finding a place was a hassle. It took four months to get a place through Married Student Housing."

Advising and Counseling

"If I had come here as a freshman, I probably wouldn't have made it."

"I was impressed_with the O-week advisor, however more services should be available to inform incoming students."

Advising and Counseling (cont.)

"Services available to students should be made known."

"Counselors were of little help. No specific requirements for four year programs were given to aid the student. My major complaint is that it's too businesslike -- doesn't come down to the individual."

"There is no counselor at the Tecumseh Center, and no advising unless you make somebody listen to you."

"I was helped most by friends and individual students. I think an Indian counselor the students chose would be better."

"Learning Assistance Center helped reading and listening comprehension immensely."

"Was helped by Native Americans, but no one was real cooperative."

__Financial_Aid

"You have to tell them what you want, not ask them."

"If you don't stand up for yourself, Financial Aids won't help.

"When I came here I lost the Bureau of Indian Affairs money. Then the Financial Aids office told me nothing could be done. After pressure was applied, new forms were filled out and I finally got the money."

"No problem in getting money at the beginning, but now the process in itself is a hassle."

"I did not receive any money until the end of October, so I had to move out. Financial Aids is so impersonal -- I was treated like a piece of furniture."

"I knew I could get à BIA grant, but had to hassle Financial Aids to get it approved."

"I did everything mostly without the help of Financial Aid. I filled out an application and heard nothing. I tried again and got a loan."

"There is no real help given to aid the student in looking for ways to finance his/her education. All you do is fill out the forms and they check your credit."

Citations refer to authorities listed in the bibliography.

- 4. B Wintun. See Forbes, generally.
- .5. D 80. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there are now 78 Indian reservations here in California.
- 6. A Black Elk. Osceola was a Seminole Teader, Geronimo was an Apache leader, Tecumseh a Shawnee leader, and Quanna Parker a Commanche leader. See Hodge generally.
- 7. E Arizona.
- 8. D Although many Indians on reservations, like other poor people, receive food stamps or AFDC, they do not receive federal money simply because they live on reservations.
- 9. D The average educational level for Indians under federal supervision has been calculated to be as low as 5th grade. <u>Indian Education: A National Challenge</u>, page XII*
- 10. B Hoopa. Located near Eureka, California, the Hoopa-Reservation is home for about-3,500 Indians.
- 11. E Over 150. At the time of the conquest there were 84 distinct dialects spoken in California by over 150 separate tribal groups. For information on the language groups, see Forbes, page 190.
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- 13. D Declined 80 percent. After the discovery of gold, the wholesale elimination of California Indians by white settlers reduced the Indian population here from 96,000 in 1850 to only 16,000 in 1880. See Forbes, page 59.
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- 22. TRUE
- 23. TRUE -----
- 24. TRUE The California Indian claims case before the U.S. Indian Claims Commission resulted in a settlement of \$29,100,000 on July 30, 1964, for land taken illegally from California Indians. The land involved included most of California.
- 25. FALSE. The current UCD Catalogue lists more than 20 courses in Native American Studies:
- 26. TRÙÈ
- 27. FALSE
- 28. FALSE California's early laws which, among other things, prohibited Indian testimony in courts, limited Indian rights to own and aquire property, and permitted a form of Indian slavery, directly violating the treaty of Guada-lupe-Hidalgo. See Forbes, page 60.

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